



Independence Detective
Mike Richman

ABBIE DARST | PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Throughout his 17-year career, Independence Police Detective Mike Richman has worked in a profession he loves, serving a community he has come to call home. Born and raised in New York and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Richman moved to northern Kentucky just before starting college and attended Northern Kentucky University, earning a degree in criminal justice. Now married with two children, Richman’s passion and enthusiasm for his job, his family and his community have never been stronger. His desire to serve those around him and foster relationships makes him an asset to his department and the citizens of Independence.

Back in high school I took a law enforcement class taught by a retired New York City Police officer who got me interested in law enforcement. I was a kid at the time and it took me a couple of years to figure out what I wanted to do. But the class really piqued my interest in the field. As a little kid, I wanted to be a fireman because my dad was a volunteer fireman in New York, and I was always around that type of thing. I like the service part of it, I guess.

I’m the oldest of four children. My brothers and sister live in this area. My brother works for the Independence Fire Department. It just seemed like this was the place for me to be. I grew up in New York and then Florida, but this seems like home to me. I live in Independence, my kids go to school here. This is the place from which I will retire, I’m sure.

When I first became an officer, they had to tell me to go home. A shift would be over and I’d still be there four hours later. I remember thinking, ‘I can’t believe they are paying me to do this.’ Priorities have switched a little bit because I have a family, kids I have to take care of and things to do at home. If I didn’t have a family, I’d be a patrolman on second shift forever, and be on duty every Friday and Saturday night, because that’s when everything happens.

I loved working in Dayton, Ky. I got a lot of experience there. It’s a smaller department so you had to rely on yourself at all times and I learned what to do and what not to do. I responded to every call you can think of there. There was no detective to call, so if you got the case, you worked it. Looking

“*I think I’m still a patrolman at heart. I like to work extra details and put on my uniform. I like the community contact, getting out and the spontaneity of the calls. I still enjoy that.*”

back, I’m glad I started there, because I gained a lot of experience.

I think I’m still a patrolman at heart. I like to work extra details and put on my uniform. I like the community contact, getting out and the spontaneity of the calls. I still enjoy that. I can’t see into the future, but think I’ll eventually go back to patrol one day.

Our department has a minimum-man coverage of three patrol officers on each shift. If someone is on vacation or at training, the shift will post an opening and I’ll sign up to work a regular shift. Or if the school has something it needs security for, I try to sign up for that just to put on my uniform and go back and be a patrolman. I get the opportunity to work with other guys and younger guys — because in the five years I’ve been a detective, the agency has hired several new guys I don’t have the chance to work with normally.

When I work the road with the new guys — there are things they show me from when they came out of the academy. I say, ‘I’ve never seen that before, but it is kind of neat.’ I don’t know everything and new guys can show me stuff too.

Being a detective, my basic hours are 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday, which is very nice. I’m on call of course, but off at night, on weekends and holidays. It is a flexible schedule. So being a detective has really helped out with having a family. On the other hand, being a detective is hard on me because I see things I wouldn’t normally see. Some of the cases with kids or death scenes, those take a toll on me. But that’s what is good about my strong family life. My family is very supportive and I think that helps me do this job better. If I had to go home to an empty house, that would be hard.

I really like interviewing people, suspects and witnesses. I think I developed that through patrol. When you talk to people on traffic stops and start digging, you get the feeling something is not right and dig a little

more. It is the same whether sitting in an interview room or on the side of the road.

I don’t like working the child sex-abuse cases, but I do get satisfaction out of giving parents and kids closure, and putting someone in prison who belongs in prison. Some guys are intimidated working sexual assault cases, but I always tell officers it’s no different than a basic domestic violence case — same evidence, same facts, same information — just a different charge.

I enjoy being a detective too because there are times I may be at home and get calls from guys on the road who ask, ‘What should we do about this?’ or ‘How should we do this?’ I like that I’m that far along in my career that guys trust me to call and ask for advice.

When I think about what I want to do after this career, I think school resource officer or court security officer — always something that has to do with police work. There’s nothing else I want to do. Overall I really love this job and can’t imagine doing anything else.

The thing I like most about this department is how active it is in the community. Since I’ve been here, the most absolute best friends I’ve made have come out of the citizens’ police academy. My wife and these ladies and their husbands, we go to dinner and plan camping trips. Obviously I’m good friends with officers who work here too, but outside of here, I’ve met some tremendous people and become really good friends with them.

Looking back, I have no regrets about anything I did. From being on patrol to being a K-9 handler to FTO to being on the SWAT team to investigations, I’ve enjoyed everything. There is nothing I’ve thought, ‘I wish I wouldn’t have done that.’ I can’t look back and say anything was a big mistake.

Abbie Darst can be reached at abbie.darst@ky.gov or (859) 622-6453.